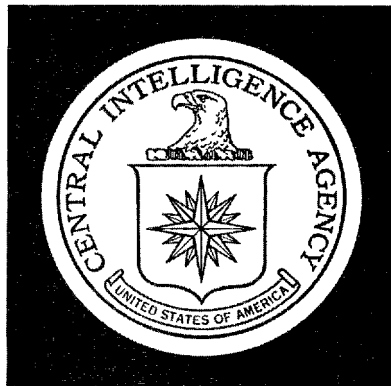


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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam

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15 June 1967

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Information as of 1600
15 June 1967

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HIGHLIGHTS

General Duong Van ("Big") Minh is continuing his efforts to return to Vietnam and may intend to run for the presidency. In major battles on 13-14 June near Saigon, allied forces inflicted heavy losses on Communist troops.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:
Allied forces killed nearly 270 Communists in major battles north and southwest of Saigon during 13-14 June (Paras. 1-3). MACV has accepted the Viet Cong Special Region 10 subordinate to COSVN and located in the Rung Sat Special Zone southeast of Saigon (Paras. 4-8). The Northern Front, which is the Communist military headquarters responsible for enemy operations in lower Quang Tri Province and in all of adjacent Thua Thien Province, may be developing battalion-level support units similar to those of a North Vietnamese Army division, according to recent prisoner interrogation reports (Paras. 9-12).

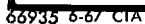
II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:
General Duong Van ("Big") Minh is continuing his attempts to return to Vietnam and may intend to run for the presidency (Paras. 1-2).

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IV. Other Communist Military Developments:
There is nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments: There is
nothing of significance to report.

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Allied forces killed nearly 270 Communists in major battles north and southwest of Saigon during 13-14 June.

2. The heaviest fighting occurred in the delta province of Phong Dinh, 115 miles southwest of Saigon. Four ARVN battalions reported killing 207 Viet Cong during search-and-destroy Operation DAN CHI 289A. ARVN casualties included five killed and 41 wounded.

3. North of Saigon, in Phuoc Long Province, company-strength elements of an eight-battalion US infantry task force conducting Operation BILLINGS fought a five-hour engagement on 14 June with possible elements of the 9th Viet Cong Division near the Communist-infested War Zone "D" redoubt. Sixty enemy troops were killed; US losses were three killed and 11 wounded.

MACV Accepts Viet Cong 10th Special Region

4. MACV has formally accepted into its order-of-battle holdings for Communist forces in South Vietnam the Viet Cong 10th Special Region (SR 10), which is subordinate to the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN) and located in the Rung Sat Special Zone (RSSZ) southeast of Saigon. The designation "SR 10" is an arbitrary one used by MACV to differentiate between this region and Viet Cong Military Region 10 (MR 10), which comprises the provinces of Quang Duc, Phuoc Long, and Binh Long in northwestern III Corps.

5. The Viet Cong apparently formed "SR 10" to eliminate difficulties of coordination caused by the division of the Rung Sat operational area among several other Communist regional commands in the Saigon area. There are no indications concerning the permanency of this reorganizational alignment, but the consolidation of the entire RSSZ

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under a single headquarters command is a sound and logical one. In addition to its assigned role of improving Viet Cong military capabilities in the RSSZ, the "SR 10" headquarters appears to be responsible for administrative and political control throughout the area as well.

6. In late 1964 a unit was formed in the RSSZ to organize and train an amphibious sapper battalion capable of interdicting the allied shipping channels between Vung Tau and Saigon. The initial designation of the unit as the 225th Amphibious Sapper Battalion proved incorrect and later information identified it as the C-255 Battalion. The battalion consisted of four company-sized sapper or sabotage units equipped with 57-mm. recoilless rifles, mortars, machine guns, and various types of water mines.

7. Since mid-1966, four additional companies have been added to the Viet Cong force structure in the RSSZ, bringing to eight the number of separate main force sapper companies directly subordinate to "SR 10" headquarters. MACV credits each company with a strength of 100 personnel.

8. "SR 10" receives its logistical support from Group 84, COSVN Rear Services. In January 1967, the weapons inventory of "SR 10" was significantly expanded by the addition of 82-mm. mortars, 75-mm. recoilless rifles, K-44 rifles with telescopic sights, and B-40 rocket launchers.

The Northern Front

9. The Northern Front, which is the Communist military headquarters responsible for enemy operations in lower Quang Tri Province and in all of adjacent Thua Thien Province, may be developing battalion-level support units similar to those of a North Vietnamese Army (NVA) division, according to recent prisoner interrogation reports.

10. Earlier this year, the Northern Front was credited with one full regiment and four separate battalions. In late May, MACV accepted a second

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NVA regiment (the 5th) as subordinate to this command. Since then, captured enemy soldiers have identified at least two newly infiltrated NVA battalions and one NVA company in the Northern Front's area of responsibility. These latest units appear to be reconnaissance, transportation, and mortar elements of the kind which normally support a regular NVA division.

11. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] an NVA division was being formed in the Northern Front area. The development of such an enemy force, in addition to the NVA units in the immediate area of the Demilitarized Zone and in the western Quang Tri - Laotian border area, would appreciably increase the enemy threat to northern I Corps.

12. Prisoner interrogation reports, as well as captured documents [REDACTED] have also provided a considerable body of evidence indicating that the Northern Front, or "Tri-Thien Hue" area, was elevated to full Military Region status in the fall of 1966. One captured document contains the resolution of the first conference of the "Tri-Thien Hue" Military Region party committee, which apparently was held during the period 15-19 September 1966. At least two NVA officers have reported that this region is under the operational control of North Vietnam.

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I-3

II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Former chief of state General Duong Van ("Big") Minh is continuing to agitate for permission to return to Vietnam, possibly to run for the presidency. Minh, currently in exile in Bangkok, has requested a visa for the second time in three weeks, stating that it was essential he return before the elections. He has indicated that, if necessary, he would have someone else submit his application as a presidential candidate and also that he might attempt to return, even without benefit of visa, on the grounds that he has a constitutional right to campaign.

2. Minh's first request for a visa in late May was turned down by Premier Ky, who advised him to remain out of the country until after the elections lest his presence at this time prove detrimental to political stability. Ky probably regards Minh as a threat to his own presidential candidacy and the premier will probably make a serious effort to keep him abroad. However, since there appear to be no constitutional barriers to Minh's return, Ky's efforts may prove unsuccessful.

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